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ABSTRACT

This paper provides a brief description of the medieval university, which developed its institutional structure during the 12th century. The medieval university may be said to have begun in Italy and France in the 12th century, with the University of Bologna and the University of Paris serving as models for others. It was not until the 15th century that the term "universitas," referring to a corporation, was used exclusively to suggest a teaching-learning community. In England, Oxford and Cambridge were the earliest imitators of the Paris pattern, and both progressed along similar lines. These institutions then set the pattern for colonial colleges in America. With regard to instruction, the physical nature of the institution, student evaluation, and curriculum, European universities were the precursors of those that developed in the United States. (Contains 11 references.) (SLD)

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A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE MAJOR COMPONENTS OF THE MEDIEVAL SETTING

Emergence of Higher Education in America

Thomas J. Denham

Siena College

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Kenneth E. Varcoe, Ph.D.

Massachusetts Cluster

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INTRODUCTION

Intellectualism emerged slowly out of the Dark Ages. The medieval university evolved its institutional structure in the course of the twelfth century, as a result of the following chief elements: The growth of urban centers, new inventions, revival of Roman law, writings of Hippocrates and Galen, growth and dispersement of religious orders, development of the idea of the corporation and guilds, and the penetration into Western Europe of the Aristotelian and Greek writings. The university developed as institutional responses to pressures for harnessing educational forces of the professional, ecclesiastical, and governmental requirements of society. It provided educational opportunities for students pursuing careers within the Church, civil government, or as legal or medical practitioners (Altbach & Berdhal, 1981, pp. 19-21). Universities and their graduates constituted the greatest intellectual achievement of the Middle Ages (Cowley & Williams, 1991, p. 49). The university began in Italy and France in the twelfth century, with two great universities serving as models for the others: The University of Bologna for southern Europe and the University of Paris for Northern Europe (Daly, 1961, p. 17).

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Paris: The University of Masters

In Paris and northern Europe, the medieval university emerged out of the more advanced courses of instruction evolving within the cathedral church school (Lucas, 1994, p. 41). Students followed the normal guild of masters, with the undergraduates equivalent to the apprentices of the crafts (Goodchild & Wechsler, 1989, p. 6). Universities in northern Europe typically imitated the master dominated nations of Paris (Daly, 1961, p. 70). In the early years, nearly any academic gathering was commonly referred to as a *studium* ("place of study"), or less commonly, a *discipulorum*, an association of persons dedicated to scholarly pursuits. When the cathedral school attracted sufficient teachers and students, the term *studium generale* ("international place of study") came into usage. It was only in the fifteenth century when the term *universitas*, referring to a corporation, was used to exclusively suggest a teaching-learning community (Lucas, 1994, pp. 41-42). Originally, students lived in lodging, hostels or halls rented by one of them or a resident master. Jean de Sorbon, chaplain to King Louis IX, endowed the "House of Sorbonne" for sixteen students in 1256 thereby establishing the college system in Paris. The college tended to be a permanent society of masters and students, in which the older members tutored the younger, at first to supplement the lectures, and later to replace them (Goodchild & Wechsler, 1989, p. 7).

As the head of the cathedral school, the Bishop of Paris and his representative, the Chancellor of the Cathedral Church of Notre Dame, sought to maintain control of the expanding educational center around which the University of Paris was taking its form (Altbach & Berdahl, 1981, p. 19). By 1170 a guild of masters was in existence. Their main objective was to limit the control of the cathedral chancellor, who had the right to control the *licentia docendi*, the certificate to teach (Goodchild & Wechsler, 1989, p. 6). In contrast to Bologna, Parisian professors were clerics attached to churches or monasteries or under ecclesiastical discipline. Scholars turned to the Papacy for protection from the local citizenry of Paris and autonomy from the Chancellor; the pope approved a charter in 1194 that granted the university power over its internal affairs in exchange for papal magnanimous surveillance (Altbach & Berdahl, 1981, p. 19). By the thirteenth century, the University of Paris, specializing in theological matters, was drawing students from all over Christendom and had grown into a single *studium generale*. It became the favorite of popes (Daly 1961, p. 18). It was the universally recognized source for interpretation of ecclesiastical doctrine within the Catholic Church (Altbach & Berdahl, 1981, p. 19). Paris evolved into the supreme center for the study of dialectics and theology because of the outstanding teaching of masters like William of Champeaux, Roger Bacon (1220-1292), Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), and Peter Abelard (1079-1142) (Cowley & Williams, 1991, p.45). In less than two hundred years after the founding of the University of Paris, universities in France were created in Toulouse, Montpellier, Orleans, Angers, Avignon, Chahors, Grenoble, Orange, Chartres, Laon, Reims and Liege (Gwynne-Thomas, 1981, p. 65).

Bologna: The University of Students

In Italy, Bologna was bigger, more prosperous, more diverse and more interested in education and culture than other contemporary communities. It was here that an independent and literate laity first appeared and developed (Ridder-Symoens, 1992, p. 247). In the university of students format, Bologna was the alternative model that emerged from the municipal schools teaching the civil law of ancient Rome, attracting hordes of students. Chartered in 1158 by Emperor Frederick Barbarossa, Bologna began as a law school and later developed faculties of arts, medicine, theology, and philosophy (Cowley & Williams, 1991, p.44). It became the model of university organization for Italy, Spain and southern France, countries where the study of law always had political, social and academic significance (Haskins, 1940, p. 18). Like Paris, Bologna had its problems with the locals. Quarrels and riots led to the migration of scholars to other cities, thus establishing new universities in Modena, Vicenza, Arezzo, and Padua.

Typically, law students were older and wealthier than the arts students of the north, and therefore they were better positioned to seize the opportunity to organize student guilds for mutual protection and control of operations the institution. Students welded power over professors in terms of absences, fines, compensation, and "classroom management." This unique system lasted until the late fourteenth century, when income from student fees came to be supplemented by salaries paid by the commune. Eventually the Bologna and Paris models coalesced, with power shared between professors and the student rector (Goodchild & Wechsler, 1989, pp. 7-8).

Oxford and Cambridge

Political disputes between France and England resulted in a great migration of theological students back to England at Oxford (1167-1168). Following disagreements, masters and students migrated in 1209 and in 1229 from Paris to Cambridge. Oxford and Cambridge were the earliest imitators of the Paris pattern and both progressed along identical lines with residence halls or colleges emerging as influential, semi-autonomous, endowed units with the university organization (Gwynne-Thomas, 1981, p. 65). To this day, Cambridge has a reputation for scientific and mathematical learning in contrast to the classical heritage of Oxford. Cambridge was a small version of Oxford and never obtained domination over the town that distinguished Oxford; both had town-gown troubles over rents and food (Schachner, 1932, p. 294). Whereas Paris had a rector, Oxford had proctors to assist the chancellor who was the reported to the bishop of Lincoln. The chancellor could be removed from office by a congregation called by the proctors (Daly, 1961, p.72). Oxford and Cambridge remained the only universities in England and Wales for the next six hundred years (Gwynne-Thomas, 1981, p. 65). Evolving from the Parisian model, they set the pattern for the colonial colleges in America (Altbach & Berdahl, 1981, p. 21).

Teacher and Student "Nations"

Introduced in northern Europe after the model of Paris, teachers guilds or *nationes* ("nations") as they were known initially were voluntary associations of scholars who shared similar ethic, language, or regional association (Lucas, p. 1994, p. 42). With the immigration of so many students and scholars from all parts of Europe, it was natural that they should organize into groups to protect themselves from the cathedral clergy, the local citizens, and against each other (Goodchild & Wechsler, 1989, p. 6). At some universities guilds were independent units, but at others they were separate geographical groupings within the university assemblies, sometimes functioning mainly to elect the rector. They were influential parts of university life

from the thirteenth to the end of the sixteenth centuries especially in examining, protecting and defending members of their organization. Each nation had its own proctor, elected annually from six scholars, and was responsible for executing the regulations passed in the congregation of the regent masters, representing the interests of that particular nation, and educating the members of their group on the practical workings of constitutional government. Paris recognized four nations officially: French, Normand, English, and Picardian (Lucas, 1994, p. 42). Generally the universities of Southern France, Spain, and Italy copied the form of the nations at Bologna such as Padua, Florence and Orleans. By 1400, Bologna only recognized three nations: Lombard, Tuscan, and Roman (Daly, 1961, p. 32). There was a great deal of quarreling and feuding between the nations. The organization of nations foundered on the rocks of growing national consciousness (Daly, 1961, pp. 63-74).

Growth of Universities in Europe

Chartered in 1231 by Frederick II, Salerno possessed mineral springs, which made it a natural center of healing (Gwynne-Thomas, 1981, p. 61). It grew as a medical school and produced extensive medical literature composed by authors that taught there. The institution was noted for creating a trend from practical to theoretical instruction. The introduction of the "scholastic" method was concomitant with writing in natural science and metaphysics. The Salerno school of medicine owes its great fame to the success of physicians and surgeons in the treatment and cures of patients. Its image as "the city of the art of medicine" was lost once its legacy had passed on to the professors of medicine at Paris, Bologna and Montpellier (Wieruszowski, 1966, pp. 74-77). In southern Europe, competitor schools emerged on the Bologna model such as Montpellier, Orleans, Naples (1224), Padua, and Portia (Haskins, 1940, p. 18). Another contribution of the Italian universities came in 1348. This was the year that the Council of Florence established the first "board of governors" that became a model for the American board of trustees (Cowley & Williams, 1991, p. 47). Prague, established by royal charter of Charles IV in 1347, followed the Parisian model. At Prague, students and masters were represented by four nations: Bohemia, Bavaria, Poland, and Saxony. Each nation and each faculty had two representatives on a sixteen-man board that, along with the rector, supervised the university (Daly, 1961, pp.72-73). An unstable political climate did not favor higher education in Scotland until the fifteenth century, when universities were established at St. Andrews (1411), Glasgow (1453), and Aberdee (1494). In Germany, Vienna (1365), Heidelberg (1386) and Cologne (1388) were some of the earliest universities (Gwynne-Thomas, 1981, p. 65).

METHODS OF INSTRUCTION

The average age of a first-year medieval student was about the age of a sophomore or junior in our contemporary high schools, and generally the student's day began around 4:00 A.M. with Mass (Daly, 1961, p. 126). Lectures followed two formats. The first and most important lecture, which began at 5:00 A.M. or 6:00 A.M., was the "ordinary." Taught by a salaried professor, it lasted about two hours and formed the basis of the curriculum (Daly, 1961, pp. 108-109). Some masters preferred to speak at a brisk conversational pace that made note taking impossible, while others were willing to set a pace that allowed students to write verbatim from the professor. In Paris, ordinary lectures, deliberately held in the morning, forced professors to lecture extemporaneously in the dark without notes or candles for illumination (Lucas, 1994, pp. 56-57). The second type of lecture was the "extraordinary" at Bologna or the "cursory" at Paris. This lecture was given in the afternoon in a more survey or review format extending until around 4:00 P.M. or 5:00 P.M. In the evening the medieval student might attend an organized recitation, or study on his own (Daly, 1961, pp. 108-109).

Prior to the invention of the printing press, books were rare and prohibitively expensive, and may have included the following: The Latin grammars of Donatus and Priscian, the logical manuals of Boethius and Aristotle, the practical astronomy of Bebe and Ptolemy, and the complete works of Euclid. As a result of a scarcity of resources, teachers in the medieval period had to rely heavily upon oral lecturing, leaving students to transcribe notes as best they could. In addition, library holdings were sparse and often inaccessible to students (Lucas, 1994, p. 55). In addition to formal lectures and disputations, another source of learning were catechetical repetition of the materials covered in class during which the scholar was quizzed about the lecture either by the lecturer himself, or someone else (Daly, 1961, pp. 108-109). In terms of academic freedom, disputants had to conceptualized within the framework of Christian dogma. The concept of academic freedom did not take form until the seventeenth century. The dialectic method ruled supreme in the Middle Ages and well into the nineteenth century (Cowley & Williams, 1991, p. 49).

PHYSICAL NATURE

In the early days of the medieval university, the professor used his own room or rooms to conduct lectures; when classes became too large he would have to hire a hall. Once student populations grew and faculty ceased to migrate, universities acquired buildings and property. In Paris and Bologna, lectures were held in houses rented by the masters, examinations, meetings,

and ceremonies were held in public buildings, churches, and convents. To accommodate and house the growing student population, college buildings arose in universities with large faculty of arts such as Paris, Oxford, Cambridge, and later, the German universities. After 1420 a special type of building appeared, modeled after the Bologna style: The house of wisdom, with rooms grouped around an arcaded courtyard. At Oxford (c. 1320) the Congregation House was erected, followed by the Divinity School and other faculties with funds from individual benefactors. Similarly at Cambridge, the Schools Quadrangle in the late fourteenth and fifteenth century was built with university funds (Daly, 1961, pp. 136-137). Rude wooden benches and desks in the Divinity School were an improvement for students accustomed to sitting on a straw covered floor. In Germany, towns and universities had close ties and the latter acquired housing in converted private or religious houses. In the fifteenth century, special academic buildings were constructed. The strong stone buildings of universities, nations and colleges facilitated the establishment of libraries with collections added from resources obtained by gifts, legacies, fines, and purchases. By 1500, old and new universities alike possessed proper academic facilities, including lecture rooms, assembly rooms, chapels, libraries and student and teacher lodgings. The advent of physical space prevented universities from migrating, and university towns acquired a character of their own (Ridder-Symoens, 1961, pp. 136-139).

METHODS OF EVALUATION

The universities were the inventors of examinations, graduations and degrees (Compayre, 1897, p. 139). Those apprentices that passed the *trivium* (grammar, rhetoric, and dialectic) became bachelors, equivalent to the craft bachelors or journeymen. Those that qualified in the Seven Liberal Arts (grammar, rhetoric, dialectic, arithmetic, music, geometry, and astronomy) became masters, licensed to teach the bachelors and apprentices (Goodchild & Wechsler, 1989, p. 6). The period of study of the artist or apprentice, before he became a bachelor who had "determined" to continue for the licentiate, lasted from four to five years. In addition, he participated in the class disputations of the teacher and attended various types of disputations. A disputation was the presentation, explanation and proof of some statement or theory and the answering of objections against it by an opponent (Daly, 1961, p. 109). The determination was a series of disputations given at least once a week, during Lent, under the supervision of the master. After having satisfied the master that he was prepared to go to his determination, the next step was the "qualifying examination" for the actual determination. The "responsion," at which the bachelor responded to the master, was held the previous December of the Lent during

which the candidate determined. An examination by a master of the nation followed to determine that the student had read the required books and attended the lectures. Once a determiner had successfully completed his determination and joined the ranks of bachelors of art, he probably stopped with his education, since he could obtain a position as teacher. Pursuing a master in arts required further years of study, lecture and disputation (Daly 1961, pp. 126-132).

CURRICULUM

In the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries, various popes reaffirmed the obligation for major cathedral churches to educate the clergy in their own schools and expand the curricula. The course of studies embraced the full spectrum of the Seven Liberal Arts, a division of subject matter inherited from a traditional classification system devised by antique encyclopedists. This included the subjects of both the *trivium* (grammar, rhetoric, and dialectic) and the *quadrivium* (arithmetic, music, geometry, and astronomy) (Lucas, 1994, p. 37). From their beginning, the medieval universities were occupationally oriented and promoted specialized education and not liberal education, as many misconceive. Salerno was for medical students, Bologna for law students, and Paris for theologians and scholars (Crowley & Williams, 1991, p. 45). In the Paris model, the educational emphasis during the eleventh and twelfth centuries moved from grammar to dialectic, and the *trivium* and *quadtrivium* were gradually made subordinate to dialectic and the other parts of philosophy (Daly, 1961, p. 17). "It has often been said that what was read and taught at Paris was also read and taught at Oxford, especially theology" (Wieruszowski, 1966, p. 59). At Bologna it was grammar, and especially the tradition of rhetoric, that formed the basis for the study of law (Daly, 1961, p. 23).

The evolution of cathedral church schools into universities was tied closely to the rise of scholasticism and the development of theology as a systematic discipline reaching its greatest height in the thirteenth century with Thomas Aquinas. Scholasticism was a specific form of syllogistic reasoning, where for the first time theological questions were brought forward for sustained and intensive formal analysis in systematic fashion (Lucas, 1994, pp. 38-39).

SUMMARY

By 1500, it was estimated that there were almost eighty universities thriving in Western Europe. With the socio-economic and political transformations the continent was experiencing, it was inevitable that the sectarian approach of scholasticism would be replaced with a more pragmatic and contemporary concern of classical humanism. This next phase was characteristic of the great period of the Renaissance (Gwynne-Thomas, 1981, p. 65).

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